

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. By this amendment, claims 1-8 are amended, and claims 9-13 are added. Claim 1 is amended to delete the phrase "characterize in that" for better form. Claims 2-8 are amended to replace "characterized in that" with "wherein" for better form. These amendments to claims 1-8 were not done to further distinguish from the prior art.

Claim 1 is amended to recite the following features: a) the base of the gas generator carrier extends perpendicular to the central axis of the gas bag module; b) the peripheral wall of the generator carrier extends in an axial direction from an outer edge of the base; c) the sidewall of the covering cap extends in an axial direction from the front wall of the covering cap; d) the detent hooks are formed on an edge of the sidewall facing away from the front wall of the covering cap; and e) the detent hooks engaging into the detent openings in the base form a detent mechanism for connecting the covering cap to the gas generator carrier. Claim 1 as amended patentably defines over the cited prior art.

In particular, Cundill does not disclose or suggest the combination of features a-e mentioned above. Cundill teaches snap-fit projections 60 laterally arranged on the side wall 48 of the cover 40. The projections 60 engage corresponding openings 24 formed in the sidewalls 22 of the gas generator carrier. The side walls 48 having the openings 24 are not perpendicular to the central axis of the gas bag module.

Fischer too does not disclose or suggest the combination of features a-e mentioned above. Fischer teaches a cylindrical wall 30 that has a protrusion that

engages an opening in the peripheral wall 28 of the housing body 18. The peripheral wall 28 is not perpendicular to the central axis of the gas bag. Further, the protrusion is neither a detent hook which is part of a detent mechanism (feature e) nor is it formed on an edge of the wall 30 facing away from the front wall of the cover 24. Also, Fischer does not disclose the feature of claim 2, because the openings do not adjoin the peripheral wall 28.

Gordon et al. does not disclose or suggest a peripheral wall extending from an outer edge of the base plate 40. Gordon merely shows a cover 20 having tangs 28 which engage apertures 52 formed in the base plate 40.

Herrmann et al. does not disclose or suggest a detent mechanism for connecting a covering cap to the gas generator carrier (feature e). Merriam-Webster's Online dictionary defines detent as "a device (as a catch, dog, or spring-operated ball) for positioning and holding one mechanical part in relation to another so that the device can be released by force applied to one of the parts". The connection of the covering to the gas generator carrier of Herrmann et al. fails to meet this definition. Herrmann et al. teaches that marginal region 16 of the cover 14 is formed of a thermoplastic material (Col. 6, line 62 to Col. 7, line 5). The marginal region 16 does not have any protrusions until the region is heated in a die 42 and melts to assume the shape shown in figure 4. Also, this fastening technique is complicated and time-consuming compared to the detent connection of the present invention. Further, Herrmann et al. does not disclose or suggest the feature of claim 2, because the gas bag is positioned between the marginal region 16 of wall 30 and the web 46 of the generator carrier 12. Thus, the external diameter of the wall 30

would not correspond to the internal diameter of the web 46. Therefore, in view of the above-mentioned reasons, claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2-8, which depend from claim 1, are allowable as depending from an allowable claim and also for their specific feature recited therein.

New claim 9, which depends from claim 1, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 1 and also for the additional feature that the detent hooks contact the peripheral wall. None of the prior art discloses or suggests this feature and including all of the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, claim 9 is allowable.

New claim 10, which depends from claim 9, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 9 and also for the additional feature that the gas bag is not positioned between the side wall and the peripheral wall. None of the prior art discloses or suggests this feature and including all of the limitations of claim 9. Therefore, claim 10 is allowable.

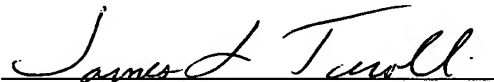
New claim 11, which depends from claim 1, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 1 and also for the additional feature that the detent hooks are formed on the edge of the side wall before the detent hooks engage into the detent openings. None of the prior art discloses or suggests this feature and including all of the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, claim 11 is allowable.

New claim 12, which depends from claim 5, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 5 and also for the additional feature that the spring elements yield to allow the detent hooks to pass through the detent openings when the gas bag module is being installed. None of the prior art discloses or suggests this feature and including all of the limitations of claim 5. Therefore, claim 12 is allowable.

New claim 13, which depends from claim 1, should be allowed for the same reasons as claim 1 and also for the additional feature that the covering cap is connected to the gas generator carrier only by a pair of the detent hooks. None of the prior art discloses or suggests this feature and including all of the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, claim 13 is allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the amendment be entered and the application allowed. Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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